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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 22 November 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit information on the effects of the sanctions in the field of the environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 91 (e) and 99.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS INTRODUCED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA
IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Although the environment has not been specifically mentioned anywhere in Security Council resolutions 757 (1992), 787 (1992) and 820 (1993), it has been seriously affected by the sanctions. The extremely negative effects in that field cannot be viewed in isolation from the overall damage caused to the economic and social development of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, since the environment is an integral part of development which, as an option of the international community, was confirmed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The difficulties therefore encountered due to the sanctions have a harmful effect both on Yugoslavia's internal development and on its cooperation with foreign countries, resulting in direct or indirect devastating consequences in the field of environmental protection and promotion.

Sustainable development in Yugoslavia, as in other developing countries, is possible to achieve only if new and additional financial assistance and access to safe and environmentally sound technologies are ensured. With the imposition of the most comprehensive embargo ever established against any State, the fulfilment of commitments undertaken at Rio by Yugoslavia becomes impossible.

The sanctions are contrary to numerous international documents in the field of environment. They derogate one of the fundamental premises of the Conference concerning the establishment of partnership among the components of the international community, without discrimination and isolation of any country or nation.

The adverse effects of the sanctions, particularly the long-term and indirect ones, are immeasurable because environmental concerns and development issues cannot be viewed only in terms of local effects. The scope of these effects is broader and multidimensional.

In conditions characterized by the effects of the sanctions, particularly by their tightening provided for in Security Council resolution 820 (1993), the already adverse trends in the economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have deteriorated. The rate of unemployment has increased, social tensions have intensified, markets are being closed, transfer of know-how and technology has come to a stop and international cooperation has been almost completely interrupted, while, wittingly or unwittingly, the exploitation level of natural resources, even of those under the regime of special protection has risen significantly, increasing the risk and threat to natural resources and cultural monuments and diminishing the readiness of and possibility for society to invest in environmental protection and promotion. The cutting down of forests for firewood as a source of energy, particularly in the most affected zones and adjacent settlements, has brought about increasing emissions of pollutants into the air and water and a lasting or long-term degradation of flora and fauna. Substitution for imported fuels used in industry and homes (oil and gas) of fuels of domestic origin (coal) has resulted in increased environmental

pollution. The shortage of fuel has further increased the danger of the "high risk" regime of production and maintenance with all its side-effects.

Trends in industrial production in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia registered a dramatic downward turn as early as last year. Although at first glance it could be concluded that in the purely environmental sense, reduced production, and especially the production of large pollutants, contributed to the quality of the environment, the economic effects are such that they do not ensure even simple reproduction, let alone the prospects for further development, in particular on the basis of new technologies, which should contribute to the preservation of the environment and its quality.

Due to the suspension of foreign trade relations of Yugoslavia, and especially due to the diminishing availability of energy, the economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will increasingly resort to the exploitation of its own energy sources, which, on the one hand, puts in jeopardy the quality of the environment (thermoelectric power plants, forests etc.) and, on the other, increases the exploitation level of natural resources, which, as a consequence, threatens the biological balance and the functioning of other ecosystems.

The sanctions and their effects diminish the financial potential of the country, thus reducing the possibility and readiness of society to invest in environmental protection and promotion.

In addition to sanctions, the civil war on the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is another pollution risk. There is no doubt whatsoever that this factor increases the pollution "imported" into Yugoslavia from other countries, just as it accounts for increased pollution "exported" from Yugoslavia to other countries since air, water and soil pollution know neither of national nor of any other borders.

The risks of the illegal import of hazardous waste and accident-induced pollution are also much greater.

Because of the sanctions, it is not always possible to substitute in an adequate manner imported raw materials and intermediaries, among other things, because of technological limitations and the quality of domestic raw materials and intermediaries. This is a frequent cause of an even greater level of environmental pollution, the effects of which can exceed local proportions.

The ecological blockade affects all the citizens and threatens the rights of every man to a sound environment. The lack of spare parts alone leads to increased risks of ecological accidents, air and water pollution, deforestation etc. Not only are the consequences of these of local character but they can also adversely affect areas far beyond Yugoslavia's borders in the form of transboundary pollution.

The sanctions have rendered impossible the implementation of a particularly important environmental project: the idea of Montenegro as an environmental State.

Because of the sanctions and their adverse effects on the overall development of the country, the natural and cultural heritage under the

protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Durmitor, Kotor, Studenica, Sopocani) has also been brought into question.

One of the most negative effects of the sanctions is the suspension of international cooperation in the field of the environment. International financial support envisaged and internationally verified for 23 projects on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, amounting to approximately US \$1.5 billion, has failed to materialize with long-term and lasting consequences for the development and quality of the environment.

Withholding of scientific and technical cooperation has manifold negative consequences for the environment. Study visits and participation at seminars, as well as the use of databases within the framework of numerous international and regional organizations (the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Mediterranean Plan of Action, cooperation of Black Sea countries, regional cooperation in the protection of the Danube, etc.) have been reduced to the minimum and the indications are that Yugoslav experts will be invited to these meetings less and less.

The isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has brought about an almost complete information blockade and a discontinuation of almost all forms of communications with the outside world, bringing into question thereby numerous activities connected with the protection and promotion of the environment with adverse effects on the environmental, economic and social status of the population.

Although the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the signatory of 51 international conventions in the environmental field, due to the sanctions their implementation has become extremely difficult. The sanctions have created many difficulties for Yugoslavia in its implementation of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, since it is becoming ever more difficult for it to replace chlorofluorocarbon technologies.

One of the vitally important fields in which international cooperation has been suspended due to the sanctions is the protection of the Adriatic Sea and of watersheds. These problems cannot be the sole responsibility of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but call for cooperation by neighbouring countries and for broader regional cooperation.

The sanctions have extremely negative effects on the system of controlling and monitoring the quality of the environment, the consequences of which can bring about the disintegration of the system because of the limited availability of funds and the lack of various components necessary for the regular operation of that system and the entire system of environmental protection.

Each individual should be accorded equal treatment in the field of the environment. The unjust sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which is an inseparable part of the international community, should be lifted as soon as possible in order to avoid the ever more disastrous effects on Yugoslavia and indirectly on the entire international community.

APPENDIX

According to the information of the competent authorities of the municipality of Pljevlja, toxic substances released in the waterways of the Čehotina and Vezicnica rivers caused an ecological catastrophe. Due to radioactive and toxic waste, living organisms in those two rivers perished. One of the reasons for this ecological catastrophe is that to a certain extent the Pljevlja thermal power station cannot maintain the adequate production process due to the lack of spare parts. Further shortage of spare parts may result in additional pollution.

As a result of the energy crisis in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the wake of the sanctions, and the inability to import oil and oil derivatives, as well as the increased prices of coal, there are instances of large-scale deforestation. During this year, 66,182 cubic metres of timber have been cut illegally - 4,635 in Montenegro, 12,433 in central Serbia and 48,091 in Kosovo and Metohija. According to the latest information, in the region of Sandzak, large quantities of timber were cut down for heating purposes in the approaching winter (in cubic metres: Sjenica, 523; Rožaj, 3,620; Tutin, 4,018; Novi Pazar, 563; and Raška, 103). Not only would further illegal cutting down of forests have negative consequences of a local character but it may have global consequences for the functioning of other ecosystems and the environment in general.
